

## FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

### Retail Food Rule Implementation Update

December 2005

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#### Background

- 2001-2004 – Extensive Food Rule revision stakeholder process, based on 2001 federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code
- September 2004 - State Board of Health hearing on proposed rule
  - Food industry representatives expressed concerns about statewide consistency in local health jurisdictions' (LHJ) adoption and application of the rule.
  - The SBOH asked for a status report by January 2006 regarding rule implementation, specifically addressing these concerns about consistency.

#### Local Adoption of the State Retail Food Rule (Chapter 246-215 WAC)

- **To date, 34/35 LHJs have adopted the state rule with only minor administrative modifications.** Thurston County is still in the adoption process.

#### Consistent Implementation of the Retail Food Rule

- Systems are in place to promote consistency
  - *DOH Code Clarifications* – created and distributed to LHJs and industry to clarify new rule sections
  - *The Food Safety Review Council (FSRC)*
    - A committee of public and private sector partners that will review issues that may be applied inconsistently in various LHJs
    - As expected, very few issues have come to the FSRC to date
      - Example: Which unpasteurized “juices” require a Consumer Advisory?

#### DOH Activities to Support Consistency (2004/05)

- Supporting local adoption and implementation of the rule
- Extensive training of LHJ staff on the new rule (three separate sets of workshops in multiple locations)
- Providing daily technical assistance and distributing a periodic Food Safety Program e-Newsletter to LHJ staff
- Creating the “Working Document,” a user-friendly version of the rule for LHJs and the industry which combines the WAC language with the adopted FDA Food Code language
- Giving dozens of presentations on the new food rule provisions to a wide variety of public and private sector stakeholder groups
- Preparing handout templates and PowerPoint presentations for our partners to copy and distribute
- Developing a statewide protocol for the training and standardization of LHJ inspectors